

Conservation Practices that Save: Integrated Pest Management

By incorporating integrated pest management (IPM) techniques into their operations, agricultural producers can reduce energy use and environmental risk while maintaining the quality of their agricultural products. For example, some cherry producers have abandoned traditional spraying schedules and now spray based on in-the-field microclimate information obtained from monitoring equipment and scouting. With a 25 percent reduction of fungicide or insecticide applications, this can reduce pesticide cost by about \$40 per acre.

IPM is environmentally responsible and economically practical crop protection. IPM includes prevention, avoidance, monitoring, and suppression of weeds, insects, diseases and other pests. IPM combines biological, cultural, and other alternatives to chemical control with the planned use of pesticides to keep pest populations below damaging levels, while minimizing harmful effects of pest control on humans and natural resources. The practice is site-specific in nature, based on approaches suited for the particular crop, pest, and location.

IPM is appropriate for most types of agriculture. It can reduce production costs and energy use while improving the quality and quantity of crops from cranberries to cotton. The techniques also can help improve water quality, air quality, and soil quality. As part of a conservation management system, IPM contributes to the overall prosperity of the farm and the quality of the environment.

Selecting crop varieties that are most suitable to local growing conditions helps reduce pest-related damages. When conservation practices, such as crop rotation and pest i c stic t n \$ t Whe

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March 2006

Scouting for pests, including weeds, diseases, and insects, is a key component of integrated pest management.